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A small group of seven choir members of the Kaunas Tremtiniu choras is touring the U.S. (Chicago, IL; Lemont, IL; Cicero, IL; Cleveland, OH; Detroit, MI) and Canada (Toronto, ONT).

The group, together with writer/journalist A. Garmute consists of former partisans and political prisoners who for patriotic actions in their youth, spent 19, 26 or other absurd numbers of years exiled to Siberia and elsewhere.

Upon their return to Lithuania, they are not having easy lives and are not being granted pensions to live even comfortably.

The group, was invited for the tour by the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. Human Services Council (its President Birute Jasaitis) and a few other individuals (including Dr. Petras Kisielius who himself suffered during the WWII years) and Marija Remys (President of the Lithuanian Foundation).

The choir, which left many members back in Kaunas, already performed twice in the Chicagoland area.

Their 2 hour program consists of excerpts from their diaries, partisan songs sung a cappella. A. Garmute read excerpts from her poetry (about the chameleon politicians of Lithuania) and from her books (she was one of the authors of the touching AMZINO ISALO ZEMEJE, published in 1989 which featured stories of children exiled to Siberia and a new book just published in 1993-MOTINELE AUGINAI), and a journalist whose articles have been published in the Canadian Lithuanian language weekly newspaper TEVISKES ZIBURIAI.

Hundreds filled the halls where they performed. They themselves admitted that their singing was not professional, but they all loved to sing during their years in the forests of Lithuania as messengers for or actively being partisans, then later in exile far from Lithuania.

They stood on stage for the entire program (with only one intermission), straight postured-men in their slightly wrinkled black suits, women in their simple folk costumes.

They came up to the microphone and introduced themselves with a grain of humor based on their origins in Dzukija, Znavykas, etc. (since Lithuania as a whole and particular regions call themselves singers by genetic inheritance).

All those life experiences... As one of them said, we are "living monuments" or "museum pieces", a rapidly decreasing number of eyewitnesses to history. Lithuanian-speaking Lithuanians who attend their concerts will hear them, they will read about their lives.

What about the human interest? Perhaps some journalist somewhere would like to talk to a former partisan as a human interest story for the English-language press.

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